



# Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views



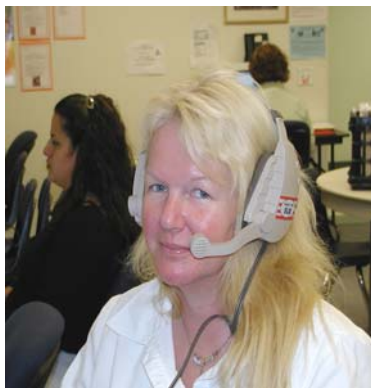
*"If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time...But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."—Lila Watson, Australian aboriginal educator and activist*

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The Happy Trails Issue

Jan. 30, 2006

## Thank you Katherine, Welcome Alec!



We want to thank Katherine Wales for many years of capable technical assistance to the adult school. She is going to continue working for the district, but has chosen to work only for the district technology department rather than splitting an assignment. Katherine has truly been a member of the adult education family as she has kept our computers running, helped envision our future, anticipated needs, and used her considerable skills to support our website and its use. Katherine has often gone to teachers' homes or fixed computers brought in, always with the idea of helping the adult school be the best it can be. She also taught for the adult school, and with her wealth of ideas and expertise, and her close proximity, I am sure we'll see her regularly still. Good luck K.W.!

We want to welcome Alec VanderWoude as adult ed.'s new tech support person (which we will now share with Extended Learning). Alec has spent the past year as an IT consultant in Santa Cruz county, providing technical support and systems administration to local businesses and residents. Most recently, he was assisting a number of schools in the PVUSD with their technical support needs. Prior to this, Alec worked for Cruzio, a local Internet service provider. In fact, if you've ever called Cruzio for tech support, there's a good chance he's the one that helped you. Alec received his B.S. in Geography from the University of Illinois, and he is continuing his education, this time in computers, at Cabrillo College.

## Planning Moves Ahead for 150th Anniversary Celebration

A large and energetic group of our teachers and staff have been meeting to plan our school's celebration of 150 year of public adult education in California. The celebration will happen on the morning of Saturday, March 11 and certainly will include music, food, and dancing. The group has formed into committees under the capable organization of Cathy Jo Diaz and Natalie Carranco. Additionally there will be special activities all week from March 13 - 17. There is a likelihood some of our students will go to Sacramento that Monday, March 13, to talk to our legislators about the importance of adult education. If you want to help support the celebration, the next meeting will be Tuesday, at 4:00 at Green Valley, or contact C.J. or Nat.

**Coaches' Corner  
(With Cathy Jo Diaz and Molly Rose)  
On page two.**



## **Coaches' Corner** **(With Cathy Jo Diaz and Molly Rose)**

*Hello Teachers and Staff!*

Here are some responses to an interesting theoretical question asked by Charles DeWald (who teaches Intermediate Low in the evenings at Porter) at a PDRT. These responses are edited due to space.

### **“Does a teacher need to speak the learners’ language to be an effective teacher?”**

- I actually think it hinders a teacher. I’ve taught in classes with about 12 different languages—it wouldn’t even be practical to think of speaking all 12 languages! Using the students’ native language in class is a very bad crutch for both students and teachers and slows the students down. I’ve studied both Spanish and French without a word of English—it forced me to learn the language, not to translate, which is a very bad habit. Because almost all of our students speak Spanish a lot of teachers are tempted to use it, but think about how someone who doesn’t speak Spanish feels if you use Spanish in class!

–Karen Reid, ESL Department Chair

- In my experience, I’ve found that being able to speak the learner’s language gives one options and tools not available to the monolingual teacher. The most difficult aspect of teaching bilingually, of course, is not to fall into the trap of using the students’ language too much. The teacher must be constantly assessing and aware of the students’ levels of understanding in order to “stretch” their grasp of English as much as possible, still maintaining the understanding necessary for processing instructions and comparing the two grammars and vocabularies (an invaluable tool in itself). I believe in using the students’ background and experience (including language) as much as possible for accelerating learning.

–Shirley Lopez, Mixed Level Corralitos Creek Apartments

- It’s not possible to translate Japanese “Haiku” into English.

–Charlie DeWald, Intermediate Low Downtown Center

- If we were ESL teachers in the Bay area we would probably have multi-lingual classes (with Asian languages being the predominant ones). Not knowing the language forces a teacher to be more creative. Knowing the language can make both the teacher and students “lazy”, i.e. they become dependent on translations. But when you’re really stumped then it’s very convenient to speak the language!

–Bing Shaw, BL1 Radcliff School

- I have taught for over 25 years here in the US and 2 years in Turkey and feel that it isn’t necessary to speak the Learners language to be an effective teacher. It is helpful to know the language so that you can sometimes recognize that they misunderstood something and give cognates or explain words (by giving examples) that you know they might easily misunderstand such as *assistir* in Spanish means attend or go to class in English not to help and *attender* means to assist or help in English and not to go to the class. I do not speak Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or Arabic, and only some Turkish, but I have successfully taught these students.

## **Coaches' Corner cont.** **(With Cathy Jo Diaz and Molly Rose)**

For a lot of things, a picture truly is worth a thousand words. As a dancer, I equate a lot of things to dancing. When the leader leads the follower through body moves, the follower can respond immediately and do what the leader guides them to do. If the leader tells the follower what to do, it takes about 5 seconds more for the follower to understand the words mentally and then respond physically. It is the same with translating words rather than either showing the actual thing or picture of the thing or demonstrating something. With a picture or action, the person can understand immediately (if the picture or action is clear and unambiguous).

If you want to make people feel comfortable, communicate in their language during the break. I think it is my responsibility as a teacher to get the students to use English in class even if they are embarrassed. If they know you speak their language and use it a lot, many of them will not struggle to try to use English.

If you have to use the language, you learn it!

–Cynthia Stark, WAAE Assistant Principal

- An effective language teacher needs to be a good listener, a good communicator, someone, I think, who knows about language acquisition in general and can identify challenges to acquiring the new language and explain things in multiple ways using all the senses, tools and contexts possible. An effective language teacher needs to love language and communication and be ready to learn new things from students.

While I don't think it is at all *necessary*, I think knowing the learners' language can definitely help a teacher to identify and anticipate where confusions may/will likely come. It helps at the early levels to be able to communicate about things beyond the daily language lessons, talk about things like broader goals, family and work concerns that may interrupt or even halt learning. It helps build stronger relationships and explicitly demonstrates respect for the learners' background and current knowledge.

I think about my own experience. I've learned three foreign languages: Spanish, Indonesian, and Tetum (the language of East Timor). For all three languages, I had folks who I could communicate with in English in my learning environment, not all the time, and not always fully fluent in English, but especially when I was first learning the new language, I had the resource of teachers with whom I could break into English to get explained something that really had me stuck. I could also use English to talk about other aspects of my life that were interfering or overlapping with my language study.

I also had full immersion with all three languages; I worked and lived in environments in which all of those around me primarily used the language I was trying to speak. This isn't the case for almost all of my students at the Adult School. A majority of my current students tell me they only speak English in our class! Yikes!

–Pam Sexton, ESL/Citizenship H.A. Hyde

Our goal in this column is to support communication between teachers by giving them an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas. If you have any further responses to this question, other theoretical questions you'd like addressed, teaching ideas, or comments, e-mail the Teacher Coaches (Cathy Jo Diaz and Molly Rose) at [molly\\_rose@pvusd.net](mailto:molly_rose@pvusd.net).



# WAAE Calendar



*CBET Meeting*  
*Monday, January 30*  
*4:00-5:30 p.m. Green Valley*

*Porter Site Meeting*  
*Tuesday, January 31*  
*9:45 a.m. Room 3*

*WAAE celebration planning*  
*Tuesday, January 31*  
*5:00-6:00 p.m. Green Valley*

*Student Councils, Green Valley*  
*Monday, February 6*

*School Councils, Porter*  
*Tuesday, February 7*

*Community Advisory Council*  
*Wednesday, February 8,*  
*10:30 a.m. - noon*

*Career and Technical Education at WAAE, County Job Market Outlook*

*School Council*  
*Wednesday, February 8*  
*4:00-6:00, Porter*

*School Holidays (no school),*  
*Presidents Days*  
*Monday, February 13*  
*Monday, February 20*

*150th Anniversary of California Public Adult Education*  
*WAAE Celebration*  
*Saturday, March 11, 8:00-noon, Green Valley*

**We've had a large influx of new students in the last few weeks. So many of our students come for a few days, and then disappear. Are we doing all we can to retain these students? When they stop, do we send them postcards (available in the office) or call them?**